

on account of race, color, or previous condition of slavery.

I find no fault with the introductory clause, which is simply declaratory of what is written in the Constitution, that every human being born within the jurisdiction of the United States of parents not owing allegiance to any foreign sovereignty is, in the language of your Constitution itself, a natural-born citizen; but, sir, I may be allowed to say further, that I deny that the Congress of the United States ever had the power or color of power to say that any man born within the jurisdiction of the United States, not owing a foreign allegiance, is not and shall not be a citizen of the United States. Citizenship is his birthright, and neither the Congress nor the States can justly or lawfully take it from him. But while this is admitted, can you declare by congressional enactment as to citizens of the United States within the States that there shall be no discrimination among them of civil rights?

What are civil rights? I know the learning and ability of the honorable chairman of the